



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

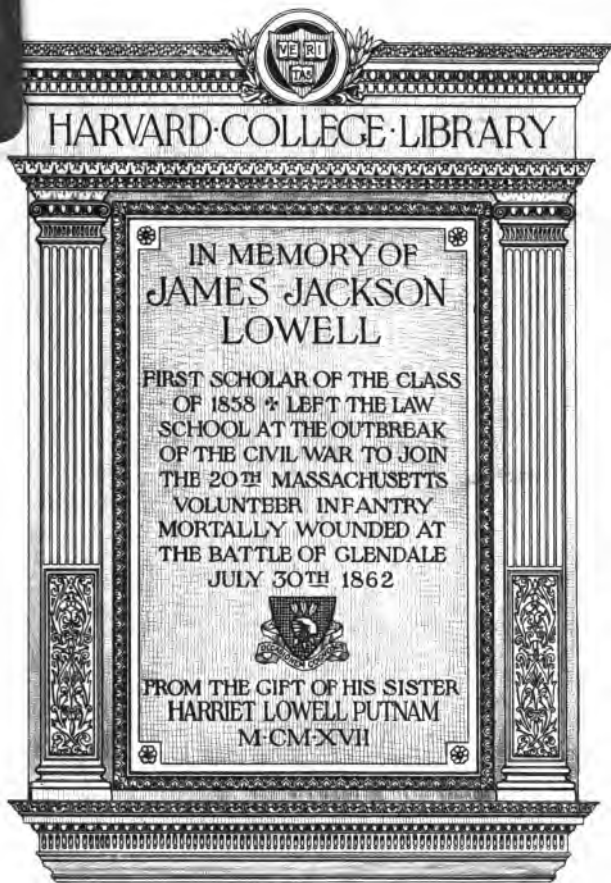
Oc
11577
3.32

WIDENER



HN NS8N -

115 77.3.32





CL 713.712
[SECOND EDITION]

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS

VERSES

WILL LAWSON

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS

My thanks for permission to reprint are due to the Editor and Proprietors of THE BULLETIN, in which journal most of these verses originally appeared; and I wish to acknowledge a like courtesy on the part of the Editors and Proprietors of the SYDNEY MAIL, AUSTRALASIAN and TOWN AND COUNTRY JOURNAL.

WILL LAWSON

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED]

Between the Lights

AND

OTHER VERSES

BY WILL LAWSON
(QUILP N.)

AUTHOR OF "THE RED WEST ROAD."



WELLINGTON, N.Z. :

FERGUSON AND HICKS, LAMBTON QUAY,
PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.

DISTRIBUTING AGENTS: EDWARDS, DUNLOP AND CO. LTD.

CLARENCE ST., SYDNEY, N.S.W.

1906

Oc 11577.3.32

Harvard College Library

June 24, 1919

J.J. Lowell fund

TO MY WIFE

CONTENTS

	Page
BETWEEN THE LIGHTS	7
THE DANCING GIRL	12
THE CATTLE TRAIN	16
THE DESTROYER	19
SHELLING PEAS	21
LADIES IN THE ENGINE-ROOM	24
TROOPERS	27
RIVER BELLS	30
ROUND THE BEND	32
ON THE HILLS	35
THE DANCE	37
DRIVIN'	40
MARCHING SONG	45
DOWN THE GORGE	48
THE FLYER	52
THE FORTY-FOURS	56
AFTER BATTLE	59
SNOW-STAR	61
NUMBER "3"	63
THE WHITE PATROL	66

	Page
THE SONG OF A SLAVE	69
THE CRUISER	73
THE SHUNTER	76
WHEN THE GUNS GO INTO BATTLE	78
SEARCHLIGHTS	82
OCEAN'S OWN	85
TRUE LOVERS	88
IN THE SOUTH BATTERY	90
HEARTS ASTERN	95
THE BATTERY COMES HOME	99
THE OLD NGAHAURANGA ROAD	103
KNOCKED OUT	108
SENTRY-GO	III

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS

STEADY the whaleboat down the ways,
And ship the oars—
The singing oars,
That will grip and swing till the ripples blaze
In the light as they sweep to the sandy shores.
The steer-oar bends, and her head swings round
To the golden light on *Somes'*;
The long blades churn with a roaring sound
Till the sharp cutwater foams,
And each heart quivers as each blade bites,
For 'tis good to be speeding between the lights—
The glow of the sunset, the flush of the moon,
The harbor lights that will twinkle soon,
And the light-o'-love in the soft, bright eyes
Of the girls who are with us between the lights
When the white, white water flies.

Full and deep-throated the music rolls
From the heavy oars—
The crashing oars ;
And it lifts the weight from our town-tired souls
As its cadence rings and soars.
Ahead past the lighthouse the sky is pale,
Foretelling the coming moon,
Marching, a queen, through a purple vale,
Down a path with red stars strewn.
And far astern, where the thin wake shows,
The daffodil glory of sunset glows.
Laughter and song and the rush of oars
In a stillness that reaches to Lethe's shores—
What can a strong man wish beyond ?
Does a maid dream more when her tired eyes close
And she glides to dream-islands of fount and frond

Lift her, and swing to the glory-song
Of the merry oars—
The laughing oars—
As they wrench and spin us along, along,
And the bright prow-smother pours.
The harbor lights, like timid stars,
Show one by one in the dark,
And stab it with tiny scimitars,

The course and the channel to mark.
The ranges rise so clear ahead—
The Somes' light flashes from white to red,
And from red it turns to white and green—
Pencarrow burns white, and we're swinging between,
Down to the island that parts the tide
Where the steamers creep with plunging lead
And the shoal-buoys sway and ride.

Quicken the stroke! The oars are wild—

“Ha! ha!” cry the oars—

The rollicking oars—

That are racing us on where the rocks are piled
With kelp when the mad sou'-easter snores,
Awaking from sleep in the ice and snow—
To-night it sleeps like the dead,
To-night there are eyes and hearts aglow,
To-night soft lips are red. . .
With laughter and jest we have moored our boat,
And the moon rolls up, like the last grand note
In a sweet, wild song that is prayer and praise—
Land and water and jewelled haze!
My heart cries out, yet it speaks no word,
For there is the grip on the strongest throat
When the deep of a soul is stirred.

Push the whale-boat over the sand,
And ship the oars—
Reluctant oars—
That scarcely yield to the tardy hand.
Slow—so slow let us drift and pause,
And sing and dream while the banjo tells
Of a Kalmuck bold and a brave Ameer.
The water is noisy with chiming bells
And we want no course to steer,
As we swing and we float between the lights.
Ah! this is surely the queen of nights
Jewelled in gold and rubies and pearls.
And you—you are truly the queen of girls
With the love-light glowing in merry eyes.
Let us love—let us dream between the lights
Where the gleaming water lies.

Homeward slowly between the Guides—
Pencarrow Light—
Somes' Island Light—
We will glide to the sob of the moaning tides
That tell their woes to the night.
Somes' Light changes—green! white! red!
Pencarrow's behind the hill.
It seems that the throbbing world is dead

So still it is—so still.
To the sound of story and laughter and oars
We have passed away to Lethe's shores.
Song in the bows, and slack astern,
The sea-oar drifts where the sea-stars burn,
What do we reck of speed or tide ?
We have passed where no Time-lash stings and scores,
On the River of Peace we glide.

* * * * *

Full and deep-throated, the music swells
From the swinging oars—
The heavy oars.
From afar comes the chiming of midnight bells,
Clashing in measures of fours ;
The tough blades churn to their tempest song,
The circling eddies foam,
And the timbers thrill as they tear along,
Bearing their burden home.
The stars wink feebly above the heights—
Ah, me ! to be floating between the lights—
Light of beacon and moon and stars—
Lovely Venus and angry Mars—
And the light of love, in the drowsy eyes. . .
Between the lights ! Between the lights !
Heigho ! How the sweet time flies.

THE DANCING GIRL

WHITE jewels gleamed
On her dazzling throat.
As she swayed and swung
To the lazy tune
The 'cellos sung,
Down a pathway strewn
With stars, she seemed
To spin and float.
Such rhythmic throbbing
Of moving limb,
With 'cellos sobbing,
Made senses swim
In Lethe's tide, where the poppies grow—
Her eyes in the soft light seemed aglow.

Her shoulders swayed,
And her soft cheek flushed,
As her eager feet
Beat out the time,
All pulsing sweet
As the poet's rhyme
Sighed low to maid
When the night is hushed.
Such lissome moving
Of limbs and hips,
And, fashioned for loving,
Such eyes and lips,
That it seemed her feet must always go
Down the pleasant road where Life's poppies grow.

The 'cellos cried,
And she heard their plaint—
Slowly she moved
Her wingéd feet,
And though she had loved
This measure sweet,
And her footsteps vied
With its echoes faint,
A tall dream-woman !
A form divine !

Hot-hearted, human,
Thrilling as wine !
But I looked, and her eyes were dreaming so,
Gazing away where the poppies grow.

I looked, and dreamed
That the 'cellos wailed
For the dancing-girl ;
And the fiddles cried
For her skirts a-swirl,
And none replied,
And then it seemed
That a white bark sailed
On a laughing river,
By drowsy shores.
I saw the quiver
And foam of oars,
As it bore this dancer, and one I trow
She loved, away where the poppies grow.

Did she hear the noise
Of loud applause,
As her dream-ship danced
On the sunlit waves,
That foamed and pranced
O'er their brothers' graves ?

Did she hear the voice
Of the 'cellos pause
To listen, sobbing? . . .
I do not know ;
But her heart was throbbing
To his, I trow,
As, lips to lips, and eyes aglow,
They dreamed away, where the poppies grow.

The jewels flashed
In her golden hair,
As she swayed and swung
To the swooning tune
The 'cellos sung—
A song of the moon,
When the fountains splashed,
And the trees were bare.
Sweeping and swaying,
Her lithe limbs flew,
The 'cellos playing
A tune that drew.
Our hearts away where the poppies grow—
In a land of dreams when the sun is low.

THE CATTLE-TRAIN

A GLARE on a wind-bound cloud !
And a locomotive's beat,
Sounding heavy and loud,
Like a myriad marching feet.
Far down the cruel grade,
Her fire doors swinging wide,
She toiled, till her fusillade
Startled the mountain-side.
Slow and hard came the engine's beat—
Like the tramp of a million marching feet.

Over the crest of the rise,
Her funnel spouting flame,
Like a battleship towing a prize,
The ponderous engine came.
Her driver's face gleamed white
As he looked at his dragging load—

Blue lightning dazzled the night,
And the rain splashed on the road,
As the big black engine topped the rise,
Like a conquering ship that towed a prize.

The thunder rolled afar,
The white horns tossed and shone;
To the clank of coupling-bar
The trucks went bumping on;
A scramble and then a cry
Showed where a beast was down—
Down in the dark, with a rolling eye
Turned to the night-sky brown.
So through the storm the train rolled on,
The bullocks moaned and the white horns shone.

Lords of the mountain-side,
Kings of the river-grass,
Gone is their splendid pride,
Soon did their glory pass.
Trucked in a cattle-train,
Dazed and hungered and parched—
Numbed with cold and crazed with pain—
Yet lords of the hills they marched,
Bellowing in their reckless pride
By brawling river and mountain side.

With thump and rattle of springs,
And clatter of under-gear,
The long train rumbles and swings
Till the tail-lights twinkle clear.
From the plain-lands down to the coast,
Over the hills between—
That is the engine's boast—
That is where she has been
A thousand times ; and each time she brings
A load of quivering captured kings.

I saw a glare on a cloud
Afar, and the engine's beat
Sounded suddenly loud,
Like a myriad marching feet.
She was climbing another hill—
I heard her big wheels race—
And then, with a sudden thrill,
I thought of her driver's face
And it seemed, in that engine's rhythmic beat,
I heard Humanity's ruthless feet.

THE DESTROYER

SHE raced away down the sunset track,
Beyond the mines and the boom ;
The spray flashed red on her turtle-back
To the whirr of her engine room.
Her funnels spouted their smoke-plumes black—
She looked the spirit of doom.

Along her sides the wavelets hissed.
As she opened out her speed,
They fell astern to snarl and twist,
And writhe in her wake and bleed.
Hers was a force no seas resist,
And she gave them little heed.

Away in the west the red sun sank
To drown in the heaving flood ;
And fast—with never a noisy crank
Or piston rod a-thud,

Her stern set low in the high wave-bank—
She swam on a sea of blood.

Into the night, when the sun had gone,
The fast destroyer flew,
And never a side-light gleamed or shone,
As the pale stars grew and grew.
What errand grim did she speed upon?
Only her captain knew.

Through the sweeping seas she clove a track
Into the blinding gloom—
Stumpy-funnelled, sinister, black—
She was the Spirit of Doom.
And the keen spray hailed on her turtle-back,
To the throb of her engine-room.

* * * * *

Back to our forts the destroyer crept,
As the dawn rushed in aflame;
Her stacks were blistered, her decks sea-swept,
But she licked her lips as she came;
And she took her place, where her comrades slept,
Like a hound that had killed its game.

SHELLING PEAS

WE sat on the steps with the door ajar—
A blue dish on your knees.
I was smoking your dad's cigar,
And you were shelling peas—
Shelling them out with a nimble thumb—
And glancing from downcast eyes.
And I felt clumsy, and big and dumb,
And you were little and wise.

You said, "When a man is married, I think,
They should give him a weekly fling."
And a rooster tipped me a knowing wink,
With a flap of his lordly wing.
You threw him some shells, and you raised your eyes;
I fumbled to strike a light,
Because you were pretty and little and wise,
And your throat was dazzling white.

"What do you think?" you, laughing, said.
I answered, "Dashed if I know."
And the family rooster raised his head
And crowed a sceptical crow.
A patch of cigar-ash soiled your dress;
I brushed it, soft, from your knees,
For I was smoking in idleness,
And you were shelling peas.

And I watched your delicate fingers go
At their swift and measured stride;
The peas fell into the dish below,
And the pods were dropped outside.
The peas were little and round and good—
The pods were tarnished and bad,
And I started off in a thinking mood—
A stupid habit I had.

"What do you think?" you asked again,
Straightening up some curls.
I said, "I think that the pods are men,
And the peas are pretty girls.
The pods are only to shield the peas,
Lest the weather their beauty mar,"
And I brushed the ash that fell on your knees
From the end of your dad's cigar.

You were shelling the peas with a nimble thumb,
And I wanted to see your eyes,
But you turned them down and the smiles *would* come,
As you said (you were pretty and wise):
"Yet each pea-pod shields several peas—
May a man love several maids?"
The rooster winked as he lounged at ease,
With his harem all colors and shades.

And then it seemed that we rode on a star,
Right into the eyes of the breeze.
A duck was chewing your dad's cigar,
And the harem was eating the peas.
"Do you think this is right?" you whispered, and I
Made answer, your hair in my eyes,
"Whether it's right or wrong, till I die
I reckon I'll stick to my prize."

I wonder now did you care at all—
I didn't take long to forget—
Love blows for each man one clarion call,
And I've never heard mine yet;
But sometimes at night when the evening star
Gleams bright and full thro' the trees,
I sit on the steps with the door ajar,
Watching you shell the peas.

LADIES IN THE ENGINE-ROOM

Let's stand back here by the boilers—
Watch 'em through the open door
Trippin' round with shoe-heels tappin'
On the noisy, iron floor.
(Mine's the small 'un with the giggle,
Pointin' like a semyphore.)

See the "chief," all teeth and whiskers,
Showin' 'em the way she goes.
(What about that one that's solemn,
With the cunnin'-lookin' nose?)
Hear their packin' *swishin'!* *swishin'!*
What a blessed lot of clothes!

Shut up, Kid, yer breezy swearin'—
Where ye bin? Be like a tomb.
Stand in here between the boilers—
They can't see us in the gloom.

'Tisn't every day there's ladies
Strollin' round our engine-room.

Now, they're goin' down the tunnel,
(Mine's the little 'un as yet—
Makes good steamin', pretty motion;
Keeps her coal bill down, I bet)
Ain't the chaperong a monster?
She'd drive through it—drippin' wet.

Now they've stopped, and Mac is tellin'
How the Yank was killed last year
When his pants caught in the shaftin',
Kind o' cloth that would'nt tear.
Yankee Bill, he went to glory—
That was Yankee Bill's affair.

Wish the "chief" would tell 'em other
Yarns about the flamin' things—
Tell 'em what we got to hang to
When we're oilin' and she swings—
How it's lovely in the tunnel
When the shaftin' bends and springs.

Never mind! They're only women!
Very likely good 'uns too—

THE CATTLE-TRAIN

A GLARE on a wind-bound cloud !
And a locomotive's beat,
Sounding heavy and loud,
Like a myriad marching feet.
Far down the cruel grade,
Her fire doors swinging wide,
She toiled, till her fusillade
Startled the mountain-side.
Slow and hard came the engine's beat—
Like the tramp of a million marching feet.

Over the crest of the rise,
Her funnel spouting flame,
Like a battleship towing a prize,
The ponderous engine came.
Her driver's face gleamed white
As he looked at his dragging load—

Blue lightning dazzled the night,
And the rain splashed on the road,
As the big black engine topped the rise,
Like a conquering ship that towed a prize.

The thunder rolled afar,
The white horns tossed and shone;
To the clank of coupling-bar
The trucks went bumping on;
A scramble and then a cry
Showed where a beast was down—
Down in the dark, with a rolling eye
Turned to the night-sky brown.
So through the storm the train rolled on,
The bullocks moaned and the white horns shone.

Lords of the mountain-side,
Kings of the river-grass,
Gone is their splendid pride,
Soon did their glory pass.
Trucked in a cattle-train,
Dazed and hungered and parched—
Numbed with cold and crazed with pain—
Yet lords of the hills they marched,
Bellowing in their reckless pride
By brawling river and mountain side.

And, signing, bid his comrades stop
As he bent, circling round,
To find the track—grass bent to some
Unmated stem.
I hated them
Because they rode like mutes, all dumb,
No jangling scabbards—tapping drum—
They rode that none might hear them come
Like harnessed men of Khem.

Each man there sat his horse right well
Without a sound—
They made no sound ;
And each man's eyes blazed fires of hell
As they roved round ;
Such eager eyes and hard-set lips
Closed stubbornly.
They seemed to me
Like bloodhounds when the hand that grips
Their straining leashes slacks and slips ;
When one mad hound his mates outstrips,
And they are racing, free.

I saw the King's tried troopers wheel
Without a sound—
They made no sound

Save that of horse-hoofs, shod with steel,
 On soaking ground.
And in the rainy evening dim
 I watched them go—
 Relentless, slow.
So sinister they seemed, these grim,
Hard, lynx-eyed men of stalwart limb;
And all my pity was for him—
 The man they hunted so.

THE RIVER BELLS

So loud in the morning light they ring
They set the stars a-quiver.
Where the rapids clatter they sway and swing,
And I trow each bell has a golden string
The fairies tug for ever.
In the flush,
In the hush
Of the dawn they ring—
“Dong! Dong! Ding!”
Down in the laughing river.

And they chime so slow in the drowsy noon
When the river grasses quiver,
When the lilies droop in the glare, and swoon,
And the willows sway to an ocean tune,
The soft sea-winds deliver.

They swing,
And they ring
In the stifling noon—
“Dong! Dong! Ding!”
Deep in the lazy river.

And they toll so softly at eventide,
When the nodding rushes shiver,
And the ripples gleam in the golden pride
Of a sun that marches through star-lands wide,
To the Land of the Great Light-Giver.

They roll,
And they toll
In the eventide—
“Dong! Dong! Ding!”
Sweet in the rushing river.

ROUND THE BEND

ROUND the bend where the pugas grow,
I heard an axle groan,
The clatter of lynch-pins knocking slow,
In a drowsy monotone.
A great voice bellowed, "Woh back there, Bill!"
"You Lion-cow, come here!"
Then I heard the "*plunk*" of a banjo shrill,
Its music sounding clear.

Round the bend the leaders came
With lazy shouldering stride,
Toughened muscle and solid frame,
Under the tawny hide.
Sturdy bullocks, and well they hauled,
Yet I saw no driver there.
And "*plank ! plunk ! plank !*" the banjo called,
Playing a reckless air.

Round the bend the waggon swayed,
 With a led horse tied behind,
While the ghostly banjo twanged and played,
 And the axles squealed and whined.
"Git there, Sergeant! Dickie! Dan!"
 "You megatheriums!"—
I looked in vain for sign of man,
 Even up in the gums.

Round the bend the dust swept down
 Till I saw the waggon-tail,
And a lazy teamster, tanned and brown,
 Lying there on a bale.
He sparred and struck at the hovering flies,
 His banjo on his chest,
He damned the heat and his horse's eyes,
 But he cursed his bullocks best.

Round the bend he looked at me,
 And nodded a curt "Good-day,"
Then let a passionate melody
 Over the pungas stray,
With "*clinka! clanka! clang! clang! clang!*"
 He soothed his sleeping dog—
So full of harmony and slang—
 "You Major-cow! You hog!"

Round the bend I watched him go
Under the noon-day glare,
With linch-pins knocking soft and low,
Playing a dainty air.
He yelled at the bullocks he could not see ;
I heard the waggon groan,
And his banjo's *twanking* came to me
In a drowsy monotone.

Round the bend the dust dropped down
And covered the waggon-tail,
And I envied that teamster, tanned and brown,
Lying there on a bale ;
Heavy and slow, his bullocks swung,
His horse dreamed on behind ;
His dog slept sound, and his banjo rung—
And his was an easy mind.

ON THE HILLS

With tightened chains
And hot heads snatching
At slackened reins ;
With quick breath catching,
The good teams climb the stubborn hills,
The grim, sardonic, scornful hills.
Ah, God ! their hearts break on the hills,
And yet my blood leaps, watching.

The strong hoofs slip
On mud and boulder,
The muscles grip
On flank and shoulder,
And proudly do they rush the hills—
The everlasting, sullen hills.
But every time they top the hills
Their hot, young blood beats colder.

The whips fall light
On sweat-stained quarter.
They wrench and fight
With breath heaved shorter.
They are the conquerors of the hills—
The finest horseflesh on the hills.
Ah! they will die here on the hills;
Their veins run *blood*, not water.

Why must they strain
With dead loads dragging,
With irksome rein
And stout hearts flagging?
Look, for your answer, to the hills—
The cruel hills, the heavy hills.
Ah! every time they cimb the hills
I see an old horse lagging.

We shout their names;
They toss the snaffle
And strain the hames,
And spurn the gravel.
They are the conquerors of the hills—
The finest blood on all the hills—
And they will die here on the hills,
When they're too worn to travel.

THE DANCE

THE music sobbed
And the dancers swung—
Whispering feet
Made rhythmic beat
That pulsed and throbbed
While a perfume clung—
Scent of roses—roses rare,
Rose of lips and raven hair.

The music swelled
With a burst of sound—
Through casement-bar
It echoed far,
And its rapture held
Us from the ground,
Until it died as the sea-waves do,
With a passionate call—my call to you.

There were roses red
In your fragrant hair,
At your bosom white
They glowed that night.
And you held your head
With a royal air,
Proud in a beauty that thrilled like wine,
But your eyes—your eyes laughed into mine.

Why is the song
Of the violin
So filled with woe?
I do not know.
Yet if Love be wrong,
Then I would sin
Just for the joy of your wondrous charm,
And your lissome grace on my yielding arm.

Rhythmical
Were the moving feet.
As the waltz went on
Your grey eyes shone.
And whimsical
And passing sweet
Were my lady's moods as we swayed and swung
To the passionate songs the fiddles sung.

Black as the night
Was your gown of lace.
Such dazzling charm
On shoulder and arm.
And there was a light
In your up-turned face
That held my eyes in a magic thrall,
While thrilling and low came the music's call.

Beauty of lips
And grace of limb—
Wondrous charm
Of throat and arm—
Music that grips
Till the senses swim!
Yet sweeter than these, though they thrilled like
wine,
Was the soul in your eyes that yearned to mine.

DRIVIN'

THE world has many kinds of trade—
Some hard and others easy ;
An' some are clean an' nobly paid,
An' others cheap and greasy.
The world has many sorts of toil
An' many people strivin'—
Some use their brains, some till the soil ;
But I exist by drivin' !
Not drivin' sheep or lazy cows,
Nor even starvin' cattle,
Nor yet with foamin', roarin' bows
And engine-room a-rattle ;
Not drivin' four tough, ill-mouthed blades
Of horse-flesh, young and borin'—
But drivin', sobbin', up the grades
An' down with brake-shoes snorin'.

*Oh, it's drivin'—drivin'—
There's many millions strivin' !
Some run in oil,
But most men toil,
An' I am drivin'—drivin' !*

The "Tank" is but a poor machine;
The "Fairlie's" almost slower;
The "Fell" requires some keepin' clean,
But this machine's a goer !
The cars may swing or backward fling
Their weight, but still she'll shift 'em;
A six-wheel coupled Baldwin rig
Is built, I guess, to lift 'em.
It isn't labour for the blind,
This population-movin' ;
You've got to keep one eye behind,
An' one ahead an' rovin' ;
There's semyfores to dodge an' duck
Both goin' an' arrivin',
But every man must trust to luck—
Which same applies to drivin'.

*Oh, it's drivin'—drivin'—
Both goin' an' arrivin' ;
I dodge an' duck*

*The worst of luck
An' get there somehow, drivin' !*

I've never heard an engine sing
Up-grade with black smoke liftin',
Nor down with lazy, rollin' swing,
Nor round the bright curves driftin';
I don't suppose she's learnt the way
(Well oiled in every bearin')
But often, on a greasy day,
I've heard some healthy swearin'.
An engine is a thing of steel,
So what's the use of sayin'
She sings in every mighty wheel?
As like as not she's prayin'
For luck to cross the trestle that
Is some darned fool's contrivin'...
I'll bet a sovereign to a hat
She s only drivin'—drivin'.

*Oh, she's drivin'—drivin'—
By reck'nin' an' contrivin'
I get her there
With time to spare,
An' bring her back—still drivin' !*

It's nice to lose your sleep at night
 An' keep awake all day-time,
 To watch the starin' head-lamp's light
 An' check the blessed way-time;
 It's cheerful-like to risk your bones,
 Because her belchin' funnel
 Knocks slack an' lime an' bricks an' stones
 From every rotten tunnel.
 It's grand to stand half-roasted and
 The other half at zero,
 To hold the lever in your hand—
 A poet's bloomin' hero;
 It's nice to watch the crowd that's met
 Both leavin' and arrivin',
 Who rush their friends an' quite forget
 The chap ahead that's drivin'.

*Oh, I'm drivin'—drivin'—
 There's many thousan's strivin';
 Some men drive cows,
 Some foamin' bows—
 I set six wheels a-drivin'!*

Now hear the words my engine speaks—
 Slow, rhythmic, yet not singin'—

As by the peaks an' tumblin' creeks
Her eighty tons goes ringin' . . .
"Man's life is just two far-stretched rails
With many a curve an' crossin';
The levels change, the wide curves range
Up grades an' down a-tossin';
An' men must live, an' men must die,
So what's the use of growlin'?
The "danger" falls, the whistle calls:
FULL STEAM!—an' take it howlin'."
These words are cheerin'-like to those
Whose lives are full of strivin'—
The smooth valves gape, the smooth valves close,
An' I am drivin', drivin'.

*Oh, it's drivin'—drivin'—
The world's a place to strive in;
When, cold an' numb,
My hour has come,
I hope I'll go there drivin'!*

A MARCHING SONG

THERE'S a mighty army marching to the music of a
band,
And the front rank steps out gaily, bearing nothing in its
hand ;
There is laughter there and gladness, for the breezes
kiss and sing,
And the quickstep rolls and ripples, and the soldiers
proudly swing ;
But, alas ! the rear-guard follows in a loose and weary
mob—
For the people's backs are burdened, and you'll some-
times hear them sob :

*As they march, march, march—
Oh ! the band's so far in front
That they scarcely ever hear it,
Though the trumpets bray and grunt.*

*Yet they march, march, march,
In a dogged, hopeless way.
Oh! I hope they'll swing together
To a marching-tune some day.*

They are lingering in the vanguard. Can't you raise a song behind?

For 't would clear the leaden dullness that is clogging heart and mind.

But I only hear the sobbing of a woman close at hand,
Where another fighter's perished—one who cannot hear the band.

And an old man toils before me—mumbling lips and silvery hair;

And a ringless mother staggers far too tired to feel or care.

Oh, you dreamers in the lead there! and you buglers! swell your strain

That the burdened ones may hear you and be lightened of their pain;

*As they tramp, tramp, tramp—
If the band would only play
It would give them heart to labour
In the hot and tiring day.
Oh! they tramp, tramp, tramp,
And they don't keep step at all,*

*And there are so few to see them
And to help them if they fall.*

To the thunder of its marching there's a mighty army
goes,
With the big drum fairly jumping to the laughing drummer's blows—
And, long dusty leagues behind him, in a silence grim
and grand,
Comes the noble, toiling rear-guard, but—they never
hear the band.
If the power were mine I'd help them (if a song
would only do)—
Oh! my outcast, toiling comrades, here's my hand in
love to you!

*As you march, march, march,
In the dull and dusty rear,
Where your aimless, weary stumbling
Is the only sound you hear.
Comrades, march! march! march!
For you'll hear the music soon
And you'll step and swing together
In a rocking, rolling tune.*

DOWN THE GORGE

I HEARD a bit-bar rattle
And horse-hoofs pacing near,
In the starlight and the silence—
How they broke the starlight silence
In the gorge!
Then I heard the tramp of cattle—
Heard a leader bellow clear,
As he led the mob, a-staring—
Breathing hard with big eyes staring,
Down the gorge.

Down the gorge a drover jingled,
In the starlight pictured clear,
Oh! his horse stepped out so gaily,
Going homeward, blithe and gaily,
Down the gorge.

And the tramp of cattle mingled
With the jangling saddle-gear,
As they shouldered down the roadway—
Fence to cliff they filled the roadway—
Down the gorge.

Flash of horns and scent of meadows,
Round the bend the cattle came—
Just a mass beneath the star-light,
Shapeless bodies 'neath the star-light—
In the gorge.

Staring wild-eyed at the shadows,
Partly wild and partly tame;
And the drover started singing—
Light of heart he led them, singing,
Down the gorge.

Down the gorge came noisy laughter
And the cracking of a whip,
And the mass of cattle shuddered—
Snorted loud and plunged and shuddered
Down the gorge.
Came a string of wild oaths after
From a ribald, mocking lip,
As the pack-horse brought the camp-gear,

Trotting to the clank of camp-gear,
Down the gorge.

Down the gorge the leaders bellowed,
Challenging the drover's song.
But the cliff is on the near side,
And a fence is on the sheer side,
Down the gorge.

And the drovers' grim hearts mellowed
As they rushed the mob along;
For the cattle should not scatter—
There is little room to scatter
Down the gorge.

Came at last the stragglers running
From the stinging, cracking lash
Of the sturdy, silent drovers,
All abreast they rode—three drovers—
Down the gorge.

And the whips were lithe and cunning;
With their horns and eyes a-flash,
Came the tired and footsore stragglers,
Running from the whips—poor stragglers!
Down the gorge.

Down the gorge I heard the mellow
Voice of someone singing still,

And the dust hung in the roadway—
Just a film above the roadway—

 In the gorge.

And an old cow's startling bellow
 Echoed loud and very shrill,
As she went with soft eyes staring,
All alert and great eyes staring,
 Down the gorge.

Then the dust sank in the shadows,
 The last hoof-beat died away ;
And once more a sleepy silence—
Such a starlit, radiant silence—

 Filled the gorge.

Came a whiff of scented meadows,
 Ripening corn and drying hay,
Then I heard a weka calling—
Like a lost soul, calling, calling—
 Up the gorge.

THE FLYER

OH! this is the song of a flyer,
Whose wheels are a dream to see;
Though many a rig lifts higher,
There's nothing that moves so free.
And over the level distance,
I wager the townships know
The throb of her heavy pistons,
And smile when they hear her blow.
For never a load can hold her;
She drives by the clock—on time—
A-rocking and all a-shoulder,
And every chain a-chime.
And never a build flies fleeter—
With half her long journey done,
She snorts when the light grades meet her,
And sways on the downward run.

A whisper afar through the dead-light
That lies on the lonely gums—
A dazzling beam from her headlight,
And a shuddering rail that hums—
A muffled roll like the throbbing
Of myriad screws off-shore,
And a laboring, rhythmic sobbing
That grows to a pulsing roar—
A strident call where the levels
Dip down, and the red roads cross—
A furnace and two-red devils,
A barrel that gleams a-toss. . . .
And so, you have seen us racing,
You'll stare till our tail-lights wheel,
But only the night-winds, chasing,
Can follow our flying steel.

* * * * *

The whispering trees are bending—
Some mimic our reckless speed,
And circle and race, pretending
They're giving the mail a lead.
And, out in the clearings, grasses
Moan sad in the draught we bring;
And every post that passes
Lifts higher the wires that sing

Of speed and a rosy morning
To follow, oh, far behind!
The twinkling "red" waves warning,
The glittering "green"—"drive blind"—
Green light, and a long bridge thunders,
And, housed on the river flat,
A youngster awakes and wonders
"If ever I'll drive like that!"

The shadows that shun the sunlight,
Fly fast when they hear our stroke;
But we fly faster with one light
That jeers at the shadow-folk.
Thrown clear in its flashing flicker,
The quivering metals shine;
And, cursing, the wheels turn quicker,
And tear at the stubborn line
That swings o'er the plain-land, gleaming
Through village and lonely town—
They watch out west for our steaming,
And laugh when our brakes go down.
The grappling cranks are heaving—
Each coupling-rod sweeps grand,
And softly her sheaves are weaving
A tale of the overland.

Oh! this is the song of a racer,
Who never was taught to climb,
And never a rig can pace her—
She drives by the clock—on time—
To waken the summer silence
Or shatter the night-mist's pall—
For many a ringing mile hence,
The people will hear her call.
And e'en when her day is ended,
And heavier builds outstrip,
She'll come in the moonlight splendid,
And blow where the crossings dip;
And men laid dead in the distance
Will turn in their rest, I know,
To hear the rush of her pistons,
And smile when they hear her blow!

THE FORTY-FOURS

(There are forty-four submerged rocks off Chatham Islands, where the "Loah Long" recently went down.)

*They lurk, awash in the swell,
With cruel lips afoam,
And never a swinging bell
To steady the good ships home.
No light-house winks in the gloom
When the mad sou'-easter roars—
You may drive her blind through the flying spume,
With thunder of rods in the engine-room;
And never an eye will mark your doom
Out on the Forty-Fours!*

There where The Sisters stand,
Seeming to say "Beware!"
This black-browed wrecker band
Crouches within its lair;

And the racing clipper ships,
 With canvas towering high,
Watch for the lick of the lips
 That marks where the hard fangs lie.
A cry from the fo'c's'le-head!
 And a staggering sea that pours!
And what does it matter if hearts new-wed
 Cry out for the women's tears unshed,
When the lights are sinking—the green and red—
 Out on the Forty-Fours?

A wife in a Cornish town
 Looks out on the deep-sea track,
Where the ships pass up and down,
 For a ship that never comes back;
And down where the Chathams drowse,
 In a sea of dazzling blue,
There's a ship with shattered bows
 And stout ribs broken through.
Nobody saw her fly
 Like a stag from the din of wars;
Nobody heard her sailors cry
 As they strove to veer in the billows high;
Nobody saw them choke and die,
 Save God—and the Forty-Fours.

Eastward from Godley Head
They lurk with their lips a-snarl,
Hoarding their treasured dead—
Henri and Jack and Karl.
From Kiel to the Golden Gate
The swift prow's lifted spray,
But the mothers and wives may wait,
And the sweethearts mourn and pray,
For down at the heel of things,
Where the whipped foam stings and scores,
There's a shattered hull that swings
To a dirge that the tempest sings,
And the sea, as it marches, flings
A curse on the Forty-Fours.

*Never a swinging bell,
Never a blazing star
Marks where, beneath the swell,
The four-and-forty are,
Crouching like beasts to spring
At the solid ribs and floors—
You may drive till your engines roar and ring,
And never an eye will see you swing
And crash and sink, for pauper or king
Dies on the Forty-Fours.*

AFTER BATTLE

I WATCHED the red sun setting till it stung my failing
eyes,

So I turned me to the eastward, though I'll never see
it rise.

For I seem to have done with labour in this narrow
world below,

Hark! the Voice of God is calling—I must leave my
gun and go.

Now the moon is shining coldly, like a lonely, frozen
lamp,

Through the river mist that's rising, soft and white,
but cold and damp.

And I hear the river singing very faint, and sweet,
and low,

But a stronger voice is calling, and He waits for me
to go.

I can see the dead Battalions, as they swing across
the sky,
I can hear their trumpets braying, see their battle
colours fly,
Now they halt, and call, and beckon; 'tis for me their
trumpets blow—
It's the Dead Battalions calling—I must leave my
work and go.

Through the Last Drum's muffled throbbing, and its
quivering, beating roll,
I can hear a woman sobbing, who is praying for my
soul.
But the mists are all around me, and the river far
below,
And the Voice of God has called me. Comrades all,
farewell, I go.

SNOW - STAR !

THE snow on the hills is pure and cold,
But you, Snow-Star,
As pure as Truth, and your heart is gold ;
I hold your love as wealth untold.
Yet better for you if that love turned cold—
For you, Snow-Star.

When you lift your glorious eyes to mine,
My queen, Snow-Star ;
I laugh to think that the stars dare shine,
And your heart-beats sing thro' my veins like wine.
You would gladly share such a life as mine ?
My queen, Snow-Star.

I stretch my arms in the night and call
To you, Snow-Star ;
For I know to you I am all in all—
When sea-gales blow and the breakers fall,
I dream of you, and, in dreaming, call
To you, Snow-Star.

You come to me and you laugh and speak
Sweet words, Snow-Star.
Your soft lips rest on my haggard cheek
And bid me turn from the wealth I seek.
I laugh and wake when I hear you speak
Sweet words, Snow-Star.

I have fought for you ; I am striving still
For you, Snow-Star ;
Your lingering kisses burn and thrill,
And I see your grey eyes flash and fill
With tears of pity. I'm striving still
For you, Snow-Star.

I would hide my grief if you did not care
For me, Snow-Star ;
But your heart would quiver in dumb despair,
You would bow your head with its sunny hair,
If I said 'twere better you should not care
For me, Snow-Star.

When sea-winds howl on the lonely hill,
You come, Snow-Star.
Your big eyes, pitying, flash and fill.
I have striven for you, I am striving still,
For I love you, girl, and I always will—
Snow-Star ! Snow-Star !

NUMBER THREE

THIS is a song of a grey-eyed maid
And an engine black and new—
They make life glide on an easy grade
And all the world seems true.
The girl lives out by the railway line
Where the Baldwin engine goes;
And, whoever may doubt that girl is mine,
That Baldwin engine knows.

I tell my friends I am studying
The style of the Yankee "tank."
They answer, "Yes, she's a dainty thing,"
And call me an engine-crank,
Saying, "Beware, she is luring you—
Great is her witchery."
I wonder if they're alluding to
The girl or to Number Three.

I take her out in the moonlight sweet—
The girl, I mean—and we
Plan pleasant ways till we hear the beat,
Afar, of the engine "3."
Then I say good-night and she says good-bye—
I pause and ask what she said;
"Nothing," she answers, "you'll have to fly,"
But I turn back instead.

And my heart flares up in a spurt of sparks
That would stagger a fire-brigade,
While Number Three makes coarse remarks
As she comes up the heavy grade.
I dream I'm adrift near a love-lit sea
On a river with grey-eyed banks.
Till there comes a clarion call for me
(The voice this time is the "tank's").

Then a voice, so sweet that it seems to flow
Like silver and rippling pearls,
Whispers to me that I must not go.
(This time the voice is the girl's.)
I must not go and I must not stay—
Was ever man placed like me?
Loth to leave those eyes of grey
And deafened by Number Three?

Then I tear away from that girl of mine
 (I've taken out patent rights),
And I hurl my feet for the railway line
 And the twinkling station lights.
I never trained for a hundred yards,
 And I'd much prefer to sit,
But if ever my name is on the cards,
 You put your boots on it.

'Tis but a tale of a little maid
 And a big, black Baldwin "tank";
They make life move on an easy grade,
 Like a swinging engine-crank.
The girl is "one" and I am "two,"
 The engine is number "three"—
That three is a crowd isn't always true—
 With us 'tis a trinity.

THE WHITE PATROL

THEIR white line marks the bar
From the headland to the spit,
And they bear the shock and jar,
Of waves that come from far
To batter and beat on it.
They keep the clamoring seas
Out of the quiet port,
Shouldering them with a careless ease,
Pleased with the giant sport.
And the restless, clattering channel bell
Cries to the ships
With iron lips,
"Well, all's well."
Rung by the pulse of the watchmen white,
Who pace so warily all the night.

The harbor lies as still
And clear as a land-locked lake—
Scarcely a ripple athrill
Or a capful of wind to spill
And make the ripples break.
Yet over the bar where the great seas march
There is battle, riot and rout,
There billows charge and topple and arch,
And the watchmen drive them out,
Stemming the rush of the ocean swell,
While the anchored ships
Hear raucous lips
Crying, "All's well."
In silver harness they tramp and roll—
The stalwart, swaggering White Patrol.

They are the sea police—
These waves of the harbor mouth.
Their vigils never cease—
Striving for order and peace
With the lawless seas from the south.
Marching from beach to the headland's gloom—
Giant policemen they,
Sending the seas to hammer and boom
On cliffs that drip with spray;

With always their cheerful message to tell—
From salt-white lips
To the anxious ships,
“Well, all’s well.”
A stormy night and a nasty sea—
Patrolling the bar so constantly.

When there is peace on the deep
And stars in the heaven’s arch,
The White Patrol snatch sleep,
Leaving look-outs to keep
A watch on their ceaseless march—
Scouts who will call at the smallest sign,
“Ho there, sleepers, awake!”
And the White Patrol is a steadfast line
When the first long rollers break ;
Charging the clattering channel-bell,
As it leaps and dips,
To shout to the ships,
“Well, all’s well.”
And the captains, safe in the inner mole,
Hear the crashing march of the White Patrol.

THE SONG OF A SLAVE

LONG ago the Pharaohs bound you—
You were prisoners in Khem,
But the God you worshipped found you,
And he made it warm for them.
You were making bricks for steeples,
Using leaves instead of straw.
You were honest Christian peoples
By the reading of the Law.
By the raw galls on our shoulders,
You are Christians, oh !
By the rough roads strewn with boulders,
Where our tired feet go.
By the whirring brakes behind us,
By the dust that lifts to blind us,
Oh, our galling girths remind us,
You are Christians, oh !

When you set the blood-foam flying—
When the rowels rip and rake—

Nostrils red and ears back-lying
With a sobbing heart a-shake,
We are staunch young brutes, and plucky,
Who can pull tho' collars choke,
While (O, people, you are lucky!)
You are godly Christian folk.
By the curse of blinding blinkers,
You are Christians, oh!
By the blows of sodden drinkers,
By the plated toe—
By your right to flog and spurn us,
You may back and twist and turn us,
And (it really don't concern us),
You are Christians, oh!

One in twenty's rather galling
And far stiffer than it seems.
One in six is cruel hauling
With a treble set of teams;
Yet you get your wheel-chocks ready,
And you crack a silly joke;
Then it's "Straighten up!" and "Steady!"
And "Git up!"—O Christian folk!
Oh, its "Lift, you scarlet somethings!"
O, good Christians, oh!

With two tons behind three dumb things
And a grade like—so.
And you'll stand and watch us straining,
Making bets that we are gaining,
Yet, this fact is still remaining—
You are Christians, oh !

Then it's down, with breechin' rubbing
And a back like half a moon,
And a silly screw-brake scrubbing
To a silly sort of tune.
With our hindfeet on our forefeet
And our haunches drooping low,
Sliding down on tender, sore feet,
Very gingerly, and slow ;
With a Christian tongue to damn us,
O good Christians, oh !
And a Christian hand to "lam " us,
And a Christian toe
To enliven our down-going,
With our cramped-up lungs a-blowing
And the hot sweat black—all showing
You are Christians, oh !

Did they hang you on a curb-chain
When they locked you up in Khem ?

Did they stun you with a verb-chain
Or an adjectival gem?
P'raps they did, your memory's hazy,
But I think it's fairly plain
That you were not driven crazy
By a boring leader's rein.
Oh, you harness us so queerly,
You good Christians, oh!
And you love your lordship dearly,
And your holy show.
Like the Pharaohs you have bound us,
But no god has come and found us,
So you need not fear to pound us,
Gallant Christians, oh!

THE CRUISER

SHE came at break of day,
Her hull against the dawn,
Blundering up the sleeping bay
Before the nets were drawn.
But little we cared for that.
The cruiser claimed our eyes—
Her funnels and spars lay flat
And the air was full of cries.

On her bridge the captain stood,
His eyes were staring wide,
Lost in a madman's mood,
Searching the rosy tide.
The smoke from the splintered stacks
Rolled over her decks in clouds.
In her armor were rents and cracks,
In the water dragged her shrouds.

We hailed, "Ahoy! ahoy!"

But her steersman never turned.
She scraped the channel buoy,
And his eyes with madness burned.
Her plates were shattered and bent,
One screw was shot away;
Broken and wounded she went—
Halt and lame, up the bay.

A wild face came to the rail,
Just aft of the broken guys;
He did not answer our hail,
But we saw the look in his eyes—
Terror and weariness,
And the look of a deafened man—
Ah, well! we could only guess
This ship has been in the van.

She had fought where the fight was worst,
With decks all splashed and strewn,
When the shrill shells struck and burst
In the light of a chill half-moon.
The smoke rolled over the sea,
And oh! she moved so slow,
And oh! the moaning of agony
From the wounded men below.

Into the port she went—

 We turned and watched her go,
With armor shattered and bent
 And engines toiling slow.
Yet proud she looked, and grim,
 As though she had fought her fight,
Out there on the morning's rim,
 Back there in the awful night.

Never shall I forget

 That sight in the early dawn,
As we lounged in the sea-mist wet,
 Before the nets were drawn;
When the broken cruiser came
 So slow that she raised no foam,
Tottering, weary, crushed, but *game*,
 Groping her blind way home.

THE SHUNTER

*The engine-bars are splashed and starr'd—
They've killed a shunter in the yard.*

“He never seen how he was struck,
And he died sudden,” someone said.
The driver coughed—“That flamin’ truck
Come on the slant and struck him dead.”
The fireman choked and growled “Hard luck!”
As he was carried to the shed.

The engine whistles short and low.
(His blood is on her ‘catcher-bars’)
We had to let his young wife know
His soul had passed beyond the stars,
Where he will hear no engines blow,
Nor listen for the coming cars.

She stared and stared—until he came,
On four men's shoulders, up the hill.
She sobbed and laughed and called his name,
And shivered when he lay so still—
She had no cruel words of blame—
She bore no one of us ill-will.

They've washed the rails and sprinkled sand.
(Oh! hear the mail go roaring on!)
And he was just a railway hand—
A hidden star that never shone—
And no one seems to understand—
Her heart is broken! He is gone!

*The engine-bars are cold and hard—
They've killed a shunter in the yard.*

WHEN THE GUNS GO INTO BATTLE

With Death on the off-side lead,
And Duty stern on the limber,
The men of the British breed
Strain sinews, steel and timber.
With jangling bar and trace,
And trail-eyes all a-rattle,
The guns rush thundering in the race,
Where "last gun in" is a sore disgrace:
For the drivers drive at a reckless pace
When the guns go into battle.

See them breasting the rise,
With trace a-sweat and straining
Till the white, hot lather flies,
And the axles roar complaining!
Clatter! Bump! Bang! They come
Galloping hard on the level—
Never a note of fife and drum—
Only the whirr of wheels that hum.
(The fearless winds from the hills crouch dumb
When the guns crash on to the revel.)

The hard-drawn trace-chains twang
And the trace-hooks grip and rattle.
The hammering trail-eyes bang
When the guns go into battle.
The drivers urge their teams
With whip and spur and curses. . . .
A gun on the foot-hills glints and gleams—
A flashing roar! And a shot horse screams—
I have dreamed what I see, in horrid dreams
Which the morning light disperses.

They have loosed the shot horse out,
And left a gunner groaning.
They are off with never a doubt
Where the long death-song is moaning.
The limbers leap and sway
To the pole-bar's noisy banging—
One horse's breath is a crimson spray,
But he shakes his head and pegs away,
For he does not want his mates to say
They saw his short-trace hanging.

Oh! hear the riotous beat
Of racing hoofs on the gravel—
You can judge from their flashing feet,
'Tis their utmost pace they travel.

The linch-pins clatter and ring—
The harness strains and shivers.
Each driver there is a battle-king;
Each leaping gun a living thing,
And the war-god's song their stout hearts sing,
Tho' maybe a boy's lip quivers.

They're reining the right-flank team—
The centre driver is falling,
By his life-blood's pulsing stream
His last reveillé's calling.
But a comrade takes his place,
And so, with scarce a falter,
The gun is off again in the race,
Where "last gun in" is a sore disgrace.
Oh! the British driver's rollicking pace,
Is a pace that nothing can alter.

To the firing-line they sweep!
Then—"Action Front!"—and swiftly
The active gunners leap,
And the gun's unlimbered deftly.
The limber goes; it's "Waggon Supply";
The brass-capped shell is handed
From waggon to trail; and the strong hands ply
To many a jest and quick reply,

While the shells rush past with a shriek or sigh,
And the earth lifts where they've landed.

Arms signal "Shot!" And the range?
"Eighteen hundred, with Fuse Seven"!
Ah! the men at the trails will change
As their bellowing guns shake Heaven;
For, steadily spitting hate,
The rifle bullets find them—
One moves too soon, and one too late,
When the tough spades lift the spent gun's weight.
Yet steady the fight, and grim the fate,
Though the grime and the sweat-streams blind
them.

With Death on the off-side lead,
And Duty stern on the near one,
The men of the fighting breed
Ride in where the hot shells sear one.
With jangling bar and trace,
And fast big-hearted cattle,
The guns go thundering in the race
Where "last gun in" is a sore disgrace;
Oh! the drivers drive at a madman's pace
When the guns go into battle.

SEARCH - LIGHTS.

We guide the search-lights over the water,
Where the horses white
Spring into the light,
And spur away, with their long manes flying,
Into the night ;
Wheeling and sweeping
The arc-lights blaze,
Crossing and creeping,
In devious ways ;
Out past the Head and away to the south'ard,
And never a cruiser there—
Yet they're moving in with their lights all smothered,
And our watchword is "Beware!"

They are creeping in though we cannot see them—
They are coming in

With their screws a-spin,
And the search-lights strain every nerve to find them
Blazing broadly and pointing thin,
Gleaming and crossing,
They pry and feel,
Where the seas are tossing
They swing and wheel.
They pick up a coaster and stare and follow,
Silvering funnel and spar;
They flicker and pause, where the black-fish wallow,
And dazzle each blinded star.

Torpedo boats with their lights all darkened
Are lurking round,
Where the solid ground
Is scarce a fathom beneath the water.
Like well-trained hounds,
Destroyers are waiting
We know not where—
The lights, gyrating,
Glimmer and stare;
And nothing is seen but rolling water
And a fishing boat off-shore.
The lights leap far, and the lights blaze shorter,
And flicker and point and soar.

We send our search-light over the water
Where the horses white
Prance into the light
And spin away with the bit-foam flying
Into the night.
Wheeling and sweeping
The arc-lights blaze,
Crossing and creeping
In silver ways.
Out past the light-house, away to the south'ard,
And never a cruiser there ;
But they're lurking round with their lights all
smothered,
And our watchword is "Beware!"

OCEAN'S OWN

THE song that the surf is brawling
Is meant for their ears alone,
Who followed the deep-sea calling
And slaved at it, blood and bone.
Oh! softly the north wind sings them
A measure that bids them rest
Where Ocean, their mother, swings them
To sleep on her throbbing breast.
The moon lifts gold in the gloaming,
The sun in the west sinks red,
And birds of the sea pass roaming,
But the Ocean's Own lie dead.

Pérchance as they lie they're dreaming
Of home and a childhood's tune
That rang through the storm-seas' screaming,
And sobbed in the warm monsoon ;

Or maybe again they're thrashing
With spray on the high bridge-rail,
And laboring engines clashing
A dirge to the men who fail.
The world passes on, forgetting,
But, off in ports, I know
There's many a brave heart fretting
For the good, brave hearts laid low.

Their ships swept out on the noon-tides,
And, lonely, their mast-head lights
Were quivering far, when the moontides
Swam glittering through the nights;
And strong where the storm-stars flicker
They drove through the wash and roll,
And ever their screws spun quicker
When baulked of their distant goal.
For the Ocean's Own were roamers—
By power of sail and steam
They swung in the long Cape combers,
Or droned up the Hoogli's stream.

The song that the surf is shouting
Is meant for their ears alone
Who went to their work undoubting,
And slaved at it blood and bone.

Oh! softly the Ocean swings them
To sleep on her heaving breast,
And the wind from the sweet north sings them
The songs that their hearts loved best.
Soft eyes are sad in their waking—
Eyes bright with the tears unshed—
And there's many a brave heart breaking;
But the Ocean's Own are dead.

TRUE LOVERS

TRUE lovers, listen!—

Soft lips aglow,
And eyes that glisten
Are sweet to know;
But the world so grave,
Oft steps between
The lover brave

And his star-eyed queen.

Then, if you would prove that your love be true,
Be strong, be strong with the strength of two,
For nobody really cares but you.

True lovers, hearken!—

I know too well
How bright roads darken,
With tolling bell,
When the cold world says
That your love must die,
And the storm-stars blaze
In a fitful sky—

Ah! if you would prove what your love will do
Stand steady together and see it through,
For nobody really cares but you.

True lovers, often
Your feet are scarred.
Brave eyes will soften,
Soft eyes grow hard.
Sometimes it seems
That the world knows best—
That all Love's dreams
Do not end in rest.
Yet the world will laugh if you part, you two,
Nodding its head it will sneer "I knew."
Nobody really cares but you.

True Lovers, whisper
Among the gums,
When airs blow crisper
And moon-time comes.
Then twine, warm arms,
Let your hot lips meet—
There's little that harms
In a true heart's beat.
And oh! be strong in your love—be true;
For whether you journey as one or as two,
Nobody really cares like you.

IN THE SOUTH BATTERY

OUR searchlights swung
The long night through—
Quivered and hung,
And swept the blue.

Yet nothing was there save the tossing plumes
Of white-tipped rollers that thundered past
To jar the cranks in the engine-rooms ;
And slap the halyards against the mast.
Nothing was there till the day
Broke clear in the east afar—
Till the search-lights ceased their play,
And died the last pale star.
Then in the north hung the cruisers' smoke,
Then rose each smoking stack,
And every man in the forts awoke
To meet their fierce attack.

We watched them grow,
As they pitched and raced,
In the dawn's red glow—
No ship outpaced—
Each kept her place in that grim black line,
And we just steadied our hands and eyes,
Saw to each gun, and thought of each mine
'Neath the waves that flashed in the sweet sunrise,
And, as we watched them there,
The northern battery spoke,
Splitting the crystal air
With fire and pale blue smoke.
The eight-inch shell sang over the sea,
And splashed the leading ship.
She answered eagerly, short and free,
With an angry tongue and lip.

They formed, abreast,
And opened fire—
Our guns depressed,
Theirs pointing higher.
Thunder and smoke, and shrieking shells—
The clang and roar when they burst.
Fierce men cursing, hot powder smells,
And an overpowering thirst,

The earth ripped up at our feet—
We answered. Her stack was gone!
And grim in the terrible heat,
We hammered and pounded on.
We missed the ships again and again,
And they missed us in return—
The guns were making a jest of men,
Yet the fight was hard and stern.

The flagship flashed
A signalled word,
And in they dashed
To madness spurred—
In where the mines lurk under the tide,
And our guns hit hot and hard.
We laughed as we watched them come in their pride,
Laughed and measured each yard. . . .
And then our captain pressed
A button. And that was all!
And few have ever guessed
How the sky-tossed fragments fall—
How the low bows swamp in the eager wave,
And the raised propellers play,
When a cruiser goes to a cruiser's grave,
With her bilge all blown away.

Then turned they slow -
From our steel-shod hail.
As we watched them go,
We heard the wail
Of a stray shell crying defiance shrill.
But we hurried the ships away,
Shouting "good-bye" from our fortified hill,
Till they swaggered out of play.
Proud and grim they came;
Defiant and slow they went.
They had lost; not theirs the blame,
They had come because they were sent.
Never a ship could cross that field,
Where our great booms marked a line.
Fighting with shell they would never yield,
But how could they fight a mine?

Away they steamed
Across the seas,
While our gunners dreamed
In the soft sea-breeze,
Watching the play of the nodding plumes,
Of the sun-lit rollers that thundered past
To jar the cranks in the engine-rooms,
And set the tossed screws racing fast,

Away the cruisers rolled,
Till only their thin smoke showed.
"They came because they were told,
And they'll have to report 'No road.'
No road this way—eh, boys? By gum!"
A laughing gunner said.
And then he thought of how they had come,
And frowned when he thought of our dead.

HEARTS ASTERN

*We've laid our course south-east by east,
Around old Pencar-row,
Where the surf boils up like the frothing yeast,
And the ocean breezes blow.
East away and south by east,
But—none of us wants to go.*

The skipper's in love with a half-caste girl
(Oh! her lips are full and red!)

"It's lonely out where the currents swirl;
I'd rather stay here," he said.

We're singin', "We're off to the Rio Grande,"
And the capstan's movin' gay;
But we'd sooner be hearin' the German band
In Oriental Bay,
Where the women walk in their dainty gear,
And the moon comes risin' slow—

Ah! yes, we know what course to steer,
But—none of us wants to go.

The mate is gone on a black-eyed Dream
(She gave him her waist to squeeze),
And he would rather lie out in the gleam
Of the stars than face the seas.
We're givin' the home-bound songs a fling
To the roll of the lazy swell;
'Twill be many a night ere we hear the ring
Of the Kelburne tram-car bell,
As it takes its load to the moonlit hills
Where there ain't no lamps to show—
The fores'l shakes and the stays'l fills,
But—none of us wants to go.

The second mate and the cook are down
Below, for they've got d.t.'s,
And the height of ambition with them's to drown
Themselves in the cool, green seas.
We're leanin' our arms on the weather rail
As the nor'-east drives her through,
Watchin' the in-bound Sydney mail
And wishin' we're in-bound too.
They sang a hymn as we got the breeze,
And the parson said, "I know

You'll act like men on the angry seas,"
But—*he* didn't have to go.

Oh! the skipper he clung to his half-caste queen
(My Oath! what a queen she were),
And I thought of what is and what might have been
Last night on the mountain spur,
Where the cable cars came past a-whirl
With their lamps a-blazin' bright;
But it came to be "last down car"—poor girl!
And it came to be "Just—good night."
She was neat and trim in her pretty gear
And her eyes were wistful. Oh!
We know what glitterin' course to steer,
But—none of us wants to go.

For the mate is gone on a lovely Dream,
But we reckon he'll wake up soon;
And the second mate and the cook, they seem
To be off in a ten-year swoon;
And each of us, caged for a four-months spell,
Will think, at least for a while,
Of a rattlin' coup in a Chinkie hell,
Or else of a woman's smile.
"For those in Peril at Sea" they sang,
As we swung her away so slow;

But it isn't the peril that brings the pang ;
It's—because we don't want to go.

*But the course is east by south and east,
And we've passed old Pencar-row ;
The water boils at her bows like yeast,
And the skipper he's broodin' so ;
But what we would like don't matter the least
Because—we have got to go.*

THE BATTERY COMES HOME

CLATTER! CLANK! CLANK! The guns are coming
 Noisily up the street,
Setting the folk of the city humming
 A tune to the tramping feet—
With jaded horses and wheels a-rattle,
 To the trail-eye's steady play,
The guns that have been in the heat of battle
 Are moving along this way.
With jingling harness and pole-bars knocking
 Heavy and loud on the poles.
Rumble! They lurch on, swaying and rocking,
 Where the sturdy youths and the girls are flocking,
Such wondering eyes and glimpses of stocking.
 RUMBLE! The Battery rolls.

RUMBLE! ROLL! ROLL! The guns are going
 Lumbering up the street—

Dragging heavily, horses blowing
Under the noon-day heat.
Sergeants riding so straight and steady,
Glancing along their teams,
For the Battery's watchword is "Always Ready!"
The message the shrapnel screams.
See the face of the first "lead" driver—
Eyes on his horse's crest—
So he looked when he flogged across a river
With a Mauser ball through his chest.
CLATTER! CLANG! CLANG! With traces tightened,
Sturdy and proud they go:
Some of the children are cowed and frightened—
That woman in black—How her face has whitened!
And many a sweet girl's eyes have brightened
Seeing a face they know.

JINGLE! JOLT! JOLT! The third gun passes,
Moving out at a trot—
Somebody there has to wipe her glasses,
And somebody growls "How hot!"
"See the quarters on that black leader!
Notice that driver's style?—
I'd like to know who's that chesnut's breeder!"
And the gunners ride and smile,

Jolted about on the clattering limber
In the way they were wont to ride,
With only a blanket 'tween them and the timber,
When the flying bullets cried.
With shod hoofs ringing and linch-pins clinking,
The Field Artillery goes,
Careless, happy, and never thinking
Of long night marches 'neath pale stars blinking.
With restless "helios" winking! Winking!
Telling of battles and foes.

CLATTER! CLANK! CLANK! The last gun thunders—
Harness and echoing hoofs—
Many a man in the crowd there wonders
How it felt in the lonely kloofs,
When the gunners dreamed and the tired teams rested—
Would you wake and stare at the stars
Till you heard a stock-horse neigh, deep-chested,
And the clatter of homestead bars?
RUMBLE! With sweat-stained horses blowing
To the pole-bars' rhythmic beat,
Steady and heavy the guns are going
Noisily up the street.
And we'll remember that grim "lead" driver
Watching his horse's crest,

•

Because of his ride through a flooded river

With a Mauser ball through his chest.

JINGLE! They go with the crowd stringing after.

CLATTER! They're marching on.

To-night there'll be drinking and kisses and laughter

And songs ringing high to the loftiest rafter,

And oats and green fodder for leader and shafter,

JINGLE! CLANK! JINGLE! They're gone!

THE OLD NGAHAURANGA ROAD

Now, let the leaders ease their load—
 Their foaming flanks are white—
For on the old Ngahauranga Road
 The brakes will hiss and bite,
As down the easy grade a-swing,
 The big coach hums along.
Come, throw aside all care, and sing
 A rousing coaching song.
The slackened trace-chains jangle clear,
 The swingle-bars join in,
And from each piece of honest gear
 There rings a merry din.
The heavy brakes have gripped the load,
 The tyres are gleaming bright,
And down the old Ngahauranga Road
 The world goes well to-night.

Above the Gorge's rugged walls
Shine star and star and star,
And, rich and pure, sweet music falls—
"Under the Deodar."
It mingles with the whirr of wheels,
Is lost and found again,
And every man among us feels
It's good to be free men—
To feel the leaping pulses beat
A-swaying round a curve,
While eyes glow soft and lips are sweet,
And nerves are solid "nerve."
Who cares if his small row is hoed?
Who cares if cake be dough?
When down the old Ngahauranga Road
We let the big bays go.

Their eager hoofs ring hard and clear—
They're pulling all they can.
A man to hold the brake and steer,
Must be—well, just a man.
And on these high box-seats, I trow,
Are girls whose hearts beat strong,
As, lurching o'er a gulf below,
We sing our careless song.

The moon peeps shyly round a peak
That points against the sky,
Warning the night wind not to speak
Till our white lamps rush by.
With tossing heads, in scorn of goad,
In all their strength and grace,
Adown the old Ngahauranga Road
Our four great coachers race.

Now double-bank the heavy brakes,
To slow her round this bluff;
A bridge's planking throbs and shakes
The driver's voice sounds gruff,
As steadily, his leaders' chests
Skirting the outer rail,
He swings them—so!—with reefing crests,
And gives them rein to sail,
With every strong hoof beating hard,
Along a level "straight,"
Where every yard is just a yard,
And no horse feels the weight.
Brave eyes flash bright in Love's own code,
That only lovers know,
When down the old Ngahauranga Road,
He lets his big bays go.

The leaders' stride is lengthening,
The wheelers follow suit;
The driver sways in-board to swing
The brake-bar from his boot.
Ahead of us there gleams the sea—
The grades are easy now,
The wheels cry out in ecstasy,
And spin, and race, and plough;
The tall trees tell us, whispering low,
How, with hot brakes a-scream,
Cobb's coaches raced here long ago,
Before the days of steam—
Five Yankee lamps like jewels glowed,
And five staunch horses tore
Along the old Ngahauranga Road,
In those brave days of yore.

The big bays' hoofs are ringing clear—
They're pulling all they know;
Old Dan can just hang on and steer,
And let the beggars go.
No fretting thong is on their hides,
No rough hand on the rein;
They'll pull and pull, with foaming sides,
And pull and pull again.

Song mingles with the roll of wheels,
Ascending to the stars,
The high coach pitches, sways, and reels,
With clashing swingle-bars,
Who cares for debts unpaid, and owed—
If wool be high or low?
We're on the old Ngahauranga Road.
Ho! Let the beauties go!

KNOCKED OUT

ORDERED ashore for a spell,
Here on the grass I lie,
Where the great trees ripple and swell
As the singing winds sweep by.
There are roses everywhere
By hawthorn hedges girt;
And there's never a fear or care,
Or anything else to hurt.
So I lie 'mid the flowers a dreamer,
Stretched full length on the sod,
Sick of the sight of a steamer,
And the swing of a piston-rod.

Over the garden hedge,
Down by the willows there,
The grass is green to the edge
Of the Maitai River, where

The ripples chatter and play
In the shallows of the ford—
Where the teams come past all day
To the crack of leather and cord—
To the tug and mutter of leather,
And the stamp and clatter of steel,
As they get to their work together,
With the river high on the wheel.

The thrushes call from the elms,
The blackbirds play on the sward,
The fragrance of flowers o'erwhelms,
And sweet is the splash of the ford.
And sweet, ah! sweetest of all,
Are the sounds of battle and strain,
When the voices of teamsters call,
And the loads sway upwards again,
To the music of chain and snaffle,
And a snort when a leader gains
The road, to scatter the gravel,
And throw his weight on the chains.

It is so pleasant to sleep
Here on the sun-warmed sward,
Lulled by the rush and sweep—
The musical rush of the ford.

Drowsing away to a tune
Of marvellous sweetness and peace,
But I'll feel the blood grip me soon,
And the song and the slumber will cease.
And at night as I drive through the weather
I'll hear, through the noise of the seas,
The creak and the mutter of leather—
The whips and the "Whoas" and the "Gees."

But I'm ordered ashore for a spell,
So here on the turf I lie,
Nothing to say or to tell,
No one to question Why?
There are roses around me abloom,
And daisies white on the grass.
Who would think of an engine-room
Near the fair wisterias?
Leave me in peace, I'm a dreamer,
And I want to dream I'm a god.
I'm sick of the sight of a steamer,
And the swing of a piston-rod.

SENTRY-GO

THE cruisers tramped on sentry-go
All night; and at the dawn
The mists came creeping down so slow—
Grey curtains softly drawn.
No star was seen; the waking east
Was brighter than the west.
The sullen seas broke foam like yeast
From every heaving crest,
And back and forward, to and fro,
The cruisers tramped on sentry-go.

The lean destroyer raced all night
To get despatches through;
She left a wake all grey and white;
She had a well-tried crew.
Her funnels showed no licking flame,
Her turbines sang and whirled;

And in the foggy dawn she came
A steed to madness spurred,
Where stealthily, so grim and slow,
The cruisers marched on sentry-go.

She saw them first, and veered to port,
To slip them in the gloom—
There was an order, crisp and short,
Down in the engine-room.
And every bolt and racing shaft
Sang in sheer ecstasy.
They gave her every scrap of draught,
For it meant life if she
Could pass those cruisers, drowsing so,
Upon their sleepy sentry-go.

The nearest cruiser's bugles cried !
Her engine-bells rang out !
A shell flew, ricochetting wide,
With hoarse and angry shout—
Then her machine-guns clattered shrill,
As she swung round to chase,
And there was wrath and curses till
She struck her racing pace.
And while she flew to strike her blow,
Her comrade tramped on sentry-go.

The fast destroyer slipped away—
The fog was lifting now—
Her seething wake was flogged with spray
Churned by her flying prow;
And on her quarter, armed and swift,
The cruiser foamed along,
Cursing the fog that would not lift
To let her sing her song—
Her song of Death, that men might know
That she was doing sentry-go.

The mists rose, fragrant, as the sun
Burned angrily and red.
Loud roared the cruiser's barbette gun—
A fountain splashed ahead
Of the destroyer. She held on,
Replying not a word.
Her spinning shafting gleamed and shone—
Her engines, as they whirled,
Cursed their bad luck, deep-voiced and low,
In crossing that grim sentry-go.

As the sweet sunlight flashed the spray
On the destroyer's rail,
The cruiser shot her stacks away,
And poured an iron hail

Into the plucky little craft,
Whose skilful engine crew
Worked fiercely with the patent draught,
And drove her madly through
The heavy seas that thundered slow,
Upon their ceaseless sentry-go.

The bright blue water ripples clear
Where the destroyer died.
And deep below lie engineer
And gunner, side by side,
For this they raced that long black night—
To get dispatches through.
They would not yield while they could fight—
They where a gallant crew. . .
Now back and forward, to and fro,
The cruisers march on sentry-go.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

"The Red West Road"

IN PAPER, ILLUSTRATED,

Price - 1/6.

PRESS OPINIONS.

BULLETIN—

We catch a glimpse of the bitter fascination of sea-labour, the glory and terror of the sea. "Coasting" and "Stokin'," for example, are vividly set down.

MELBOURNE PUNCH—

Singularly vivid and actual.

ADELAIDE REGISTER—

One more specimen of his virile style may be cited. . .

WESTERN MAIL—

There is fine expressive writing and the genuine poet speaks. There is sincerity of sympathy with the toilers in stoke-holds and other little considered dark places of the workers' world which makes this book literature—something much nearer a genuine human document than nine-tenths of the work produced south of the line.

CHRISTCHURCH PRESS—

The material is mainly ships and all their accessories and surroundings—the grimy stoke-hole, the roaring furnaces, the throbbing piston, the thrumming, thrashing screw, the hiss and swish of waves, the lonely light-house, the harbour-bar, mysterious cries in the darkness; these and such like, with certain weird or pathetic humanities thrown in. And he is fascinated by the thought of great liners out on the dark, heaving waters, or touched by the first faint kiss of dawn.

WELLINGTON, N.Z. :
Printed by Ferguson & Hicks, Lambton Quay.

1908.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

